

Sam-Japan
Stories & Incidents

1917

It Happens in Japan

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FOREWORD

Everywhere—people and more people! That is what you think as you fly through Japan on an excellent government train, for you are rarely out of sight of little brown villages and industrious people. The men and women are always at work and often the children are helping. They are busy in the fields and in the tiny farms, in the orchards of mulberries picking leaves for the silkworms, or on the hillsides gathering twigs for fuel, or on the road acting as beasts of burden between the shafts of heavily laden wagons.

The villages are a dozen or fifty houses sitting in friendly fashion along the road. The house walls, wooden frames covered with rice paper, are pushed back during the day to let the world look in. There is little to be seen inside, however, for Buddhism teaches that it is only by separating oneself completely from things of this world that one may hope to become part of the Nothingness which is the Buddhist ideal of the life hereafter. But the homes are comfortable and well-to-do families always have a storeroom where their treasures are kept, to be brought out a few at a time.

While most of the Japanese are nominally followers of Buddha, many find his teachings unsatisfying, for the message he left his disciples was, "I do not know if there is a god." So the people try to fill their natural religious craving with many minor gods, of luck, mercy, wealth, plenty, and happiness, as well as the mischievous half-gods who live in the fields and forests.

But it is rather difficult to keep your faith in the god of rain after you have learned the causes of rain in one of the modern schools which the government says all young Japan must attend. Japan to-day stands near the top of the nations in literacy, with ninety-seven per cent of her men and ninety-eight per cent of her women literate. However, in spite of modern education the country peasant is often

many generations behind the city dweller, as he discovers when he goes to one of the great cities. The lure of the city is as strong in Japan as it is here, and for the same reasons.

A foreigner who for the first time visits one of the large progressive cities of Japan finds less that is new and strange to him than does a country-bred Japanese. Airships, trolley cars, telephone, telegraph, paved streets, city water system, substantial office buildings, traffic police, factories, a department store whose roof garden has a soda water fountain, movies, winking electric signs. What makes a city to-day? Whatever it is, you will find it in Tokyo or Osaka, side by side with old Japan.

Factory girls? Hundreds of thousands of them making safety matches (look on the label on the next box you buy—maybe it came from Tokyo), neckties (look at them in the next haberdasher's window), cotton goods, silks, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, a certain well-known dentifrice, toys; many indeed are the necessities and luxuries made for us by the skilful Japanese.

Factory laws? Yes, recently a few, through the efforts of Japanese Christians and missionaries to create public opinion. There need to be more.

Business girls, office girls, women teachers and even women reporters are found in this up-to-the-minute country.

Tokyo in Japan and Calcutta in India are the two largest student centers in the world. Tokyo has fifteen thousand students of college and university rank and many more thousands in high and girls' schools. The Imperial University in Tokyo, with thoroughly equipped buildings and large campus, is but one of four large universities in the city; its department on earthquakes and seismology leads the world. Professional and special schools dot the city.

As knowledge of modern science increases, belief in the old idols goes. Such knowledge has gone to the East from the West. What are we doing to give them that Christian faith which has enabled us to study the sciences and at the same time to increase our faith in God, the Father of all?

Christianity has taken a firm hold especially among the educated classes, yet it is estimated that eighty per cent of the fifty-three millions of the empire have never heard the Christian message. At the request of the missionaries, the Young Women's Christian Association began work in Japan fifteen years ago. There are about thirty student Associations. In Tokyo there is a new building for general work, with well-equipped gymnasium and domestic science department, and three dormitories in different parts of the city. In Yokohama, in addition to the general city work, the special feature is the school for women and girls emigrating to America. The Osaka Association was opened in 1917. What are two secretaries in Osaka, where there are fifty thousand girls in the factories, exclusive of all the other kinds of girls?

Requests have come for Associations in Kobe, Kyoto, Sendai and Nagasaki.

What are you doing to share the Young Women's Christian Association with the young women of Japan?

IT HAPPENS IN JAPAN

- Scene I. On the farm of Matsuda San many miles from Tokyo.
- Scene II. A month later. In a students' boarding-house in Tokyo.
- Scene III. Three years later. In a Japanese prison.
- Scene IV. Two years later. In "The Garden of Good Friends" in Tokyo.

CHARACTERS

In order of entrance

Matsuda San

Hara San, a neighbor

Saki, daughter of Matsuda San

Michi

Kiku

Chiyo

} girls studying in Tokyo

Ichiro, a man studying in Tokyo

Ume (Umé)

Masa

Hana

Miss Ray

Yoshida San

} serving sentence in a Japanese prison

} secretaries of the Y. W. C. A.

Hoshino San, committee member of the Y. W. C. A.

An Imperial Messenger

You will want to know more about Japanese girls. Read Alice M. Bacon's "Japanese Girls and Women," published by Houghton Mifflin Co., and Ruth Emerson's "Japan To-day," published by The Woman's Press.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRODUCTION

SCENE I

Characters

Matsuda San (Mrs. Pine-field)

Hara San (Mrs. Meadow)

Matsuda Saki (Miss Blossom Pine-field)

Have various other women and an old man or two transplanting the rice.

Costumes

Dark kimono, the bottom of the skirts tucked into their belts ("having their loins girt"). Below show the gay untrimmed petticoats, scarlet or orange, knee length. Light brown stockings to represent bare legs. It may be possible to find the large flat hats of Japanese farmers. One could have her head bound in blue and white toweling. Saki, as a student, wears the hakama, which is a plain pleated skirt, usually very dark garnet, or a dark blue or dark green, a belt of the same material; no obi. The hakama is worn over the kimono. Throughout the play all kimonos must be plain, quiet colors, for no respectable woman would be seen in public in any other.

Scenery

Pots of bushes or branches at wings and rear. Rows of rice cover most of the stage, set on floor in rows which are eighteen inches apart and six to ten inches between rice plants. For these use chives, which usually can be bought in bunches at five or ten cents. Each bunch should be divided into four or eight "rice plants." If no chives are procurable, onion tops could be used or heavy grasses six to eight inches high. Or turn the field into a radish patch, for the Japanese grow very large radishes, or it might be a lettuce bed. All these could be made of green paper. At one side of the stage a mound of earth (brown cloth) on which Saki can sit. Entrance from wings where convenient.

It will add to the picture to have the rear drop of pale blue for sky, with snow-crowned Fujiyama painted on it. You can find Fuji on almost any Japanese picture. While Fujiyama is not seen from every point in Japan, it is the best-loved mountain there, and is used by the Japanese themselves as most typical of their scenery.

Business

Rice is usually planted first in a nursery and when the plants are six inches high is transplanted. The women can be dividing the rice from a large solid clump to plant in the ground in small bunches.

SCENE II

Characters

Saki

Michi (Road)

Kiku (Chrysanthemum)

Chiyo (A Thousand Generations)

Ichiro San (Mr. Number One) a man.

If more speaking parts are desired, the conversations can be divided among more than three girls.

Scenery

Entrance where convenient. Interior, Japanese boarding-house kitchen. The stoves are braziers of charcoal set on a low bench. There should be several, but not one for each character. Low, wide flower pots can be used, or plain, dark jardinières; many of these which we use for flowers here are in reality Japanese stoves! To be truly Japanese all floors except the kitchen would be covered with padded matting. A table, knives, chopsticks, cooking pots. Plain walls, which in reality would be sliding wooden frames covered with white rice paper. If desirable one wall can be opened, showing garden.

Business

Girls busy preparing supper. Some squatting at stoves, fanning fire from below, stirring contents of pot with chopsticks; others standing at table preparing food.

Costumes

All girls in kimono and hakama, for all are students. Man in kimono, plain dark blue or small-figured black and white, a soft sash any color, tied in a careless bow at back. All wear white cotton tabi (mitten socks) and no sandals, since this is in the house. If not convenient to make tabi use white stockings—not silk!

SCENE III

A Japanese Prison

Characters

Ume (Plum Blossom)
Masa (Righteousness)
Hana (Flower)
Saki
Other girls if desired

Scenery

Plain walls and floor. No decorations, low table, ten inches high. Entrance where convenient.

Business

Girls can be sewing, making a new kimono. Sit on floor, sewing spread on floor.

Costumes

Very plain kimono. Dark obi, likely to be cheap black satin. Use any dark color for them. An obi is a stiff belt eight to ten inches wide, tied behind in one short loop and one short end.

SCENE IV

Characters

Miss Ray, an American secretary	}	of the Y. W. C. A.
Yoshida San, a Japanese secretary		
Hoshino San, a committee chairman		
Saki	}	students from the student boarding-house in Scene II.
Kiku		
Michi		
Chiyo		
Hana	}	from prison, Scene III.
Ume		
Imperial Messenger		

Costumes

Miss Ray, simple American business dress.

Madame Hoshino and Yoshida San, in dark kimono, as beautiful obi as you want (not in reds), white tabi. No hats, for they are not worn in Japan.

Michi	}	still wear student hakama
Kiku		
Chiyo		

Others may wear same kimono as in prison scene, but with pretty obi.

All wear white tabi.

Imperial Messenger, in gorgeous coronation red.

For the ceremonies of the coronation, men were required to wear either the modern costume worn nowadays in the courts of Europe or the ancient costume of old Japan. Use the latter, it is so much more picturesque! The white full trousers like bloomers come to the ankle held in by the scarlet flaring gauntlet-like tops of black heelless slippers. The scarlet kimono reaches half way below the knees; high square neck; sleeves very wide at their bottoms, reaching to edge of kimono; narrow belt of blue; a black skull cap. At its back a narrow, stiff, flat loop three inches high, and a narrow flat stiff end which curves up and out behind quite like a handle!

Properties

Messenger carries a narrow oblong box tied with elaborate tassels in which is a roll of stiff white paper; imperial edict paper is eighteen inches long by eight inches wide, wound round with long streamers of the colors used at the coronation, red, white, yellow, purple and green, because they are the colors in the tail of the imperial phoenix. The roll unrolls from right to left because Japanese is written in columns from right to left.

Scenery

An ordinary Japanese room as given in suggestions for Scene II. A picture scroll hanging on wall. A window where convenient; doors on opposite sides of the stage.

IT HAPPENS IN JAPAN

SCENE I

A rice field; two women transplanting young rice

Mitani San: How late Saki is in coming home from school. But then, she is always late these days when she could help with the transplanting of the rice.

O Hara San: Why do you keep her in school? She is far over the age.

Mitani San: Yes, she finished the required school two years ago, but she wants to go to the city to study. Her teacher says that if we let her, she can make much money.

O Hara San: But are you not going to have her marry?

Mitani San: Oh, yes, she must marry. Later we'll find a man for her.

O Hara San: That will be hard after she has been to the city. Here she comes now down the road.

Mitani San: No wonder she takes so long to walk home. See! she is reading as she walks. All her money goes into books. So many translations of the foreign books. Her father wants her to read the ancient Chinese classics, but they do not please her.

(Enter Saki reading a Western book.)

Bows low to her mother, but sits down on the edge of rice field, under tree, and continues to read.

Mitani San (watches her for a minute): Saki, can you not stop your reading long enough to help a little with the rice? We want to finish this before the sun goes down.

Saki: How can I step into the mud when I have on my hakama?
(Points to the student skirt.)

Mitani San: Oh, yes, I so often forget how proud you are of your student skirt!

O Hara San: Truly your hakama does keep you from helping your mother—so does all this new high education unfit our Japanese girls for their real work.

Saki: What is women's real work? Certainly not to be the slaves of men as we are! We must be recognized as the equals of men and indeed often their superiors! The newspapers talk about a new Japan which is the equal of the western nations. We cannot have a new Japan as long as half of the nation, the women, have no voice of their own; as long as they must stifle all their talents and be only the empty echoes of the men.

O Hara San (much shocked): Saki! Saki! how can you say such things! That is heresy. It is quite contrary to all the old teachings about women.

Saki: I know that! The Ancient Wisdom was written for a Japan that was shut up in its own walls caring nothing for the rest of the world. Those days are gone. How can a man walk when one foot stays five leagues behind the other? Our men, our armies, are the allies of the Western nations in a European war. A few years ago they made the world stop and watch their splendid medical work in the Japanese Russian War. But the other foot of Japan—the women! The world smiles at us as at a little child and says: "Oh, the cunning thing with her pretty obi and her fan." Yet our brains are as good as a Western woman's.

O Hara San: It has long been thought indecent for a self-respecting woman to use her brain overmuch. You remember

that we are taught that "such is the stupidity of woman's character that it is incumbent on her in every particular to distrust herself and obey her husband."

Saki: Much of the Ancient Wisdom is out of date! Our contact with the West has made us adopt the Western calendar. It also forces us to demand for women their necessary place as men's equals. Here in this very book it says, "The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free: if she be small, slight-natured, miserable, how shall men grow?"

Mitani San: Gently, gently, daughter. We know how you feel but the time has not yet come for you to climb Mount Fuji alone.

(Saki opens book and begins to read. O Hara San watches her a minute, then speaks.)

O Hara San: You'd better plant rice even if you do wear a student skirt.

Saki: Mother, teacher says it is time to start to the city, for the school there opens very soon. I'm going in now to finish weaving the silk for my best obi. (Exit.)

Mitani San: You see she is interested in something domestic. She likes to weave silk.

O Hara San: I know that you have done your best to teach her the whole duty of a woman. She knows the wisdom of the sages "that the five worst infirmities that affect women are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy and silliness. The worst of them and the parent of the other four is silliness." I fear she is afflicted with it. Indeed, I think, neighbor, you would do well to take her out of school.

Curtain

SCENE II

In a city boarding home. Several girls busy preparing a meal.

Michi: This charcoal burns so slowly today, and I'm in such a hurry to get back to school.

Kiku: It's a bother to have to cook when one wants to study.

Chiyo: Wouldn't it be fine if we could live where our meals were prepared for us? What time it would save.

Michi: Time, yes! Money—no.

Kiku: It might not cost any more. There is a girl in one of my classes who lives at the student hostel of the Young Women's Christian Association. They have a large new building, half Japanese, half foreign, in Kanda, quite near the school so she does not need to spend money on the street cars. They have a gymnasium, she says, there where they can play games besides having pleasant bedrooms and good food.

Chiyo: You know many of us spend so much time studying that we do not take time to cook enough to live on. I'm sure that was the reason that girl went home last week, too sick to study.

Kiku: I wish our schools had their own dormitories. If we could live in the schools how much time we would save! We could have a chance for more study and perhaps for some games. Some of the Christian schools teach their girls Western games like tennis. Oh, how I hate this boarding-house life!

Chiyo: How can you? I think it is far more pleasant to live here in a student boarding-house than at home. Here we have no rules; we are entirely free to come and go as we choose. It's such a relief to me after my own home, for

my parents are so old-fashioned that I was as happy with them as a whale in a goldfish pond.

Michi: It doesn't make much difference to me where I live if I can study! I wish the rest of you were taking that new course in biology. The laboratory work is far more interesting than any I've had yet.

Saki (at the door, in a scared voice): I beg pardon. (No one hears her.)

Chiyo: I'm sure it's not half so fascinating as my course in modern European literature.

Saki (again, a little more assured): I beg pardon. May I cook here?

Chiyo (aside to Michi): That must be the new one, who has taken the room opposite the two men. (To Saki) Yes, this is where we all must cook. Come in, it's each for herself of course.

Saki bows her thanks, enters with food and small cooking pot, but there is no place for her to work.

(Enter Ichiro.)

Ichiro: Hurry up, someone, and make a place for me.

Michi: Indeed, no. We belong to the New Woman's Society, so we know now that women have rights as well as men. No longer are we the slaves of men. You can just wait your turn at the stove.

Saki (aside to Chiyo): Oh, how can any Japanese girls talk so freely to a man! Surely they cannot have had the proper home training! I would never do that.

Kiku (to Ichiro): There's a new rice plant fresh from the nursery. She does not yet know city ways and no doubt still obeys the men of her family. Possibly she'd cook your rice for you.

Ichiro (approaches Saki): Oh! you're the new one in the room opposite me?

Saki: I—I—I don't know where your room is. Mine is—

Kiku: Yes, she has taken the room opposite you. See to it that you don't shock her country manners with your fresh city ways. She doesn't seem like a flower for you to pick.

Ichiro: Oh, come now, little Miss Rice-field, you'll be glad to have me come to your room to talk and drink tea, won't you?

Saki (much embarrassed): Indeed, sir, my parents have never allowed me to talk to men who are not my relatives.

Ichiro: Did you come to Tokyo to study?

Saki: Yes, I did.

Ichiro: Then you must have read the new books and know there are new ways now.

Saki: I've read every one I could get hold of. That's why I came to Tokyo.

Ichiro: That's the way the bird flies, is it? Very good, soon the rice bird will learn to be a city sparrow. Soon you'll drink tea with me.

(Saki hastily leaves room, in confusion. Much laughter.)

Curtain.

SCENE III

In a prison. Several girls seated.

Ume: I knew that people's faces changed as they grew older, and she has been here two years, but that's not it, for the change is very recent. It has come the past few months and it's funny, but she really looks younger. How can one grow younger as one grows older, and especially here in prison?

Masa: Looks aren't as important as actions, and she certainly is different in her actions. She never used to speak to one of us, and now she talks to us all and is so friendly. I thought at first she was proud of having been a student, but she never mentions that.

Hana: Who is this you are talking about?

Ume: You are a newcomer, so of course you don't know. We mean Matsuda Saki.

Hana: Why is she here?

Masa: She was a student and stabbed a man.

Hana: Then she is in prison for life.

Ume: No, the man recovered.

Hana: But what has happened to her?

Masa: That is just what we all want to know. Here comes the matron. Maybe she can tell us.

(Enter Matron; all bow respectfully.)

Matron: I overheard you say that I may know something. What is troubling you?

Several girls: What has happened to Saki?

Matron: Happened? Nothing, she is now in the kitchen.

Ume: No! We all know she is still here in prison. We mean, what has changed her so much recently.

Matron: What! Have you all felt it, too? I knew she was more willing to cooperate, no longer sullen and morose. She is indeed a new woman, but I do not know why, except that every minute she is reading a little book.

Hana: Can't you send for her and ask her?

Matron: You go yourself and bring her. (Exit Hana.)

Ume: You know how we see on the billboards, advertisements of cold cream and rouge and eye black and lipsticks and all those things to make you beautiful? And in the newspapers there is always some new secret on how to be young at thirty. Maybe Saki has one of those.

Saki (enters with Hana): You sent for me, madame?

Matron: Yes, Saki, the girls are discussing the question that interests so many women, good looks. They want to know what has happened to you lately. What has made your face change so much?

Saki (eagerly): Oh! will you listen? I have been so eager to tell you. I have indeed found the great secret and I want everyone to know. Here it all is in this little book! (Pulls Bible from obi.) This book is the way and to it I owe my new life. The first year I was here I heard nothing from my family nor my friends. Then one day a girl from my village came to see me. (Turns to the matron.) You remember her, madame? She said she wanted me to know she had not forgotten me and asked if she could do anything for me. Oh, how I wanted something to read! My friend said she'd get me a book, but I didn't want any of the new books whose advanced thoughts had brought me here. Since she has little money and little education she went to a second-hand bookstore and brought this book because it had several bright pictures and was much marked as if someone had liked it. It is called The

Sacred Writings. I was provoked at first when I saw the title, "The Sacred Writings," for long ago I gave up all belief in the Sacred Writings of Buddha and Confucius. But this is something quite different about another Man and his friends who lived off to the west across Asia. I read the book over and over. If this is true, I said to myself, if this is true, there was another way for me to live. I need not have gone the way I did. Why didn't I know before? Here is one of the songs, where someone who has sinned asks: "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, create in me a clean heart, make me to know joy and gladness." How could such things be, and I wondered, for we all in our Buddhism have been taught "Karma," that there is no escape from the punishment of our past actions. But I read on and on, and found that truly this Man Jesus is God and through Him all things are possible. I have given Him my life.

Masa: Do you mean that following the foreign God has made you so different?

Saki: I am glad if you have seen the change. At first I thought only of what a difference this would make in my life after I left prison and I spent days planning what I'd do after prison, but then realized that it must make a difference here and now, to-day.

Matron: What is it, Saki, that you plan to do after you leave here? Can you tell us?

Saki: Oh! it's only a dream. But I'm going to make it come true. I want to have a Christian home for girls like us. I want girls to know that real freedom does not come through breaking the honored conventions, that the New Woman's Society is only the gateway to a greater bondage, for true liberty is found only in service.

Masa: Is that true?

Hana: What a splendid plan!

Ume: Oh! if only there had been someone to help me I'd not have been here.

Saki: Nor I. But together let us work for each other and others like us.

Masa: Saki San, if it is your book that tells you how, will you not read it to us?

Saki: Most gladly! I want everyone to know the message of the Book.

(Saki opens book and reads.)

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return to me, for I have redeemed thee."

Curtain.

SCENE IV

In Saki's home, "The Garden of Good Friends."

Miss Ray: I'm so glad to be here at last for I've so often heard of Matsuda San's home for lonely girls. She calls it "The Garden of Good Friends."

Hoshino San: I, too, have often wanted to see the home. We hear such good reports of it.

Yoshida San: I am so pleased that she has asked the Y. W. C. A. to help her. Here she comes now.

(Enter Saki, bows politely.)

Saki: I am so grateful to you for coming at my request. I am in such need of your advice and I thought you could give more if you saw my house.

Hoshino San: We are delighted, Matsuda San, to talk to you about the needs of the girls of Tokyo. We can learn much from you.

Saki: Oh, no! I have turned to you of the Y. W. C. A. because I understand that you know all about taking care of girls, and I need suggestions. I had planned to go to America to investigate similar work and see how such homes are managed there. I cannot go, so I turn to the Y. W. C. A. for help.

Miss Ray: You want to go to America? I'll be glad to give you introductions.

Saki: Thank you, Miss Ray, but I cannot go, for no Japanese who has been in prison can get a passport out of Japan.

Hoshino San: Yes, that is the law, but how did you, a woman with such a love for girls, get into prison?

Yoshida San: And how did you open this home for lonely girls? Don't you want to tell us?

Saki: It's a long story that may bore you and though I think not, for I know you love girls. I came to the city to study when I was sixteen, as inexperienced as all girls of old Japan. My parents, village people, did not know the life of the city. Even in the country I had read many books, translations of modern works. You know that we get many of them for only five cents, and from them I learned about the freedom of the Western girl and wanted it for myself. In the student boarding house where I lived the man in the room across from me often talked to me and said I must join the New Woman's Society. I did, and finally, influenced by too advanced teachings, I went to live with him. We were each to be free to do what we wanted, but in spite of that understanding, when he left me for another woman, I stabbed him—

All: Stabbed him!

Saki: Yes. I was sent to prison. He recovered, so it meant only three years instead of life there. Then, even as my fall came through translations, so my new life came through another one. You, no doubt, know what I did not—that there are two kinds of books in the West.

Yoshida San: Yes, I was educated in the United States, and Madame Hoshino in Canada.

Saki: You then understand what I did not, that many of those books are not written as guides to action but as incentives for thought. Here often we do not know enough to see that the author is only trying to bring out discussion. We accept them as arrived truth. We read them and say that all Europeans and Americans think and act as do the characters in those books. So we follow their example.

Hoshino: My husband is chief-of-police, as perhaps you know, and from him I hear of the many offences committed by

young people through the influence of misunderstood literature.

Miss Ray: Yes, we know there are far, far too many. We must work to arouse public opinion.

Yoshida San: Miss Ray is too modest, so I must tell you that for several years she has been working to create an interest in America in good translations for our girls. The last time she went home she secured a little money. We need much more, however. We have figured out that if we can secure about five hundred dollars it will pay for the translation and publication of one book. Then the proceeds of that one would bring out the next, and so on.

Miss Ray: That is, of course, a slow process and we have a list of two dozen modern books we'd like to translate—live books, that deal with modern questions in a constructive Christian way.

Saki: We must have them! Oh, how we need them! I am happy to hear that someone is working on the problem. America has so much good to share with us! Why can't she send us her best instead of her worst? Here I am forever marked as a criminal because the evil books grabbed me before the Good Books found me! We must keep other girls from making my mistake.

Miss Ray: We hope so, but tell us why you opened this house.

Saki: You are Christians, so you can understand what the Good News meant to me when I found it. I must give it to others. As soon as I came out of prison I opened a little house for girls with the money I earned by writing. To it the girls come as soon as they leave prison. Several of them and the matron, who is now my housekeeper, are Christians and we have several girls who were in the

boarding-house where I was. Through one of them I learned of your work with students and your home for them.

Yoshida San: Yes, we have three student hostels, which accommodate seventy. But what is that among fifteen thousand women students?

Hoshino San: It is nothing, scarcely a flower in an orchard of blossoms!

Yoshida San: We are thinking too of all the young business girls who are now crowding into our cities. They too must have safe homes.

Saki: In addition to housing there is the question of recreation, and for that I need your special advice. How can my girls get wholesome fun? Think of the movie films that come to us from across the Pacific! Go now to the Ginza Theater. How many of the thousands of Japanese that see those movies know that drunken husbands are not typical of America? Yet such pictures, too poor for America, are sent here. The movies are one of our curses when they might be one of our blessings. But you all know this, as well as I do.

Yoshida San: We have at the Y. W. C. A. one evening a week bright, clean movies for the girls.

Saki: But what is that for the Empire of Japan! You do much excellent work. But what is one movie and one student secretary for all the girls in our Empire? You should have a dozen student secretaries here in this city alone, and a hundred, three hundred throughout Japan! I have read too that in America they have Christian Associations for girls in towns and on farms. Oh, if only I could have belonged to such a club at home before I came to the city! But that is too late now. You will lend me your experience in planning for my hostel?

All: Gladly, gladly, whatever we can for the girls of Japan.

Saki: Come let me show you through the house.

Miss Ray: We want to see it. (Exit all.)

(Girls are heard talking outside. Enter by other door.)

Kiku: O Ume, how fortunate you were to be there! Do tell us about it.

Chiyo: Did you see the princesses?

Hana: Of course we all went to the palace here and saw His Majesty leave for Kyoto. But you saw him on his grand triumphal entrance into the city for his coronation.

Ume: Indeed, I was fortunate! Oh, the crowds and the enthusiasm when the Emperor rode in his golden carriage through miles of his loyal subjects. The streets are gorgeous with bunting and flags and festoons of electric lights. And oh, how the thousands shouted Banzai! Banzai! Banzai! when the cannon from the palace told us the prime minister had pledged our loyalty to our Emperor!

Chiyo: We too here shouted three times. May he live a thousand years!

Ume: But have you heard of the honors His Majesty has granted the Christians? How he has decorated thirteen educators, and seven of those are Christian teachers, and he has decorated Madame Yajima, who is so gallantly fighting liquor.

Chiyo: How splendid!

Ume: But what interested me more was a rumor I heard that criminals' sentences are to be shortened, and their past records blotted out.

Kiku (at the window looking on the street): Here, quick! You who want to see coronation magnificence! Here comes one of the imperial household carriages. What can it be doing in our quiet street?

(All rush to the window.)

Ume: Oh, the carriage is stopping here! What can it mean?

Chiyo: It must be something for Saki.

(Enter messenger): I seek Matsuda Saki.

(Saki enters almost behind him.)

Saki: I am here.

(Yoshida San and Hoshino San enter with Saki. All bow low.
Miss Ray stands in doorway.)

Messenger: His Imperial Majesty sends you this (reads):

“To whom it may concern:

“Know all men by these presents, that His Imperial Majesty, having received the allegiance of his people on ascending the throne of his fathers, is pleased to recognize the work done by Matsuda Saki for the young women of his Kingdom. Know all men that in the archives of his Majesty’s Empire there is no record against Matsuda Saki. Her past is without spot or blemish.”

Saki (bows low, looks up with joyful expression and quotes): “Lo, I have blotted out thy sins.”

Miss Ray: Now you can get your passport to America for the sake of the girls of Japan.

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